

ISLE OF MAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
Highways and Traffic Division
Network Operations Section

GUIDELINES ON VERGE CUTTING

April 1997

Verge Trimming and Cutting

Guidelines on Cutting Policy

As you will be well aware, during the cutting season, the Department receives many complaints from the public and other interested bodies regarding the cutting. The majority tend to be complaints that we have not cut certain hedges and drivers cars are getting scratched. We do also get other complaints of "you have ruined the hedge" variety as well.

However, it is hoped that the following guidelines can help reduce some of the criticism that we receive. The guidelines do not apply to what we call grass plots, which are maintained under seperate agreement.

GUIDELINES

A) In general this Department does not "own" the hedges next to the road. We have only cut these on road safety grounds

We must not, unless under a specific instruction, trim or cut the top of a hedge

B) There exist two special types of verge, as agreed with the Manx Nature Conservation Trust. These are either Conservation Verges or Sensitive Verges. They are indicated on the road in green paint by either CV or SV and also in the back of the verge by a post mounted metal sign (as per the copy)

Conservation verges **MUST NOT** be trimmed, these are areas of ecological interest and will be maintained by the MNCT under a special arrangement. Plans of these are included. Sensitive verges will be cut by this Department, but to special instructions as to timing. Plans and instructions are enclosed.

C) Verges that are over one metre wide are to have a one metre wide strip adjacent to the carriageway cut twice per year. The remainder should only be cut if the verge is on the inside of a sharp bend and is considered as forming a visibility splay (or a specific instruction has been given). However, every second year these areas of verge are to be cut during the late cut. This will avoid the build up of scrub growth. See diagram 1. The hedge/bank should not be cut.

D) Verges that are under one metre wide are to have all the verge cut and sufficient of the adjacent hedge/bank cut to prevent growth intruding into the area above the verge. If there are bushes on the top of the bank that have growth that intrudes onto the area above the verge then this overgrowth can be cut back to a height of two metres above the verge level. See diagram 2

E) Where no verge exists then the face of the hedge/bank should be cut sufficiently to prevent any growth intruding above the carriageway for a height of 5 metres above the carriageway

The above are not expected to be fully comprehensive, but sufficient for the majority of cases.

C QUAGGIN
April 1997

Department of Transport

Guidelines on verge cutting

Diagram 1. Verge over 1.0m wide

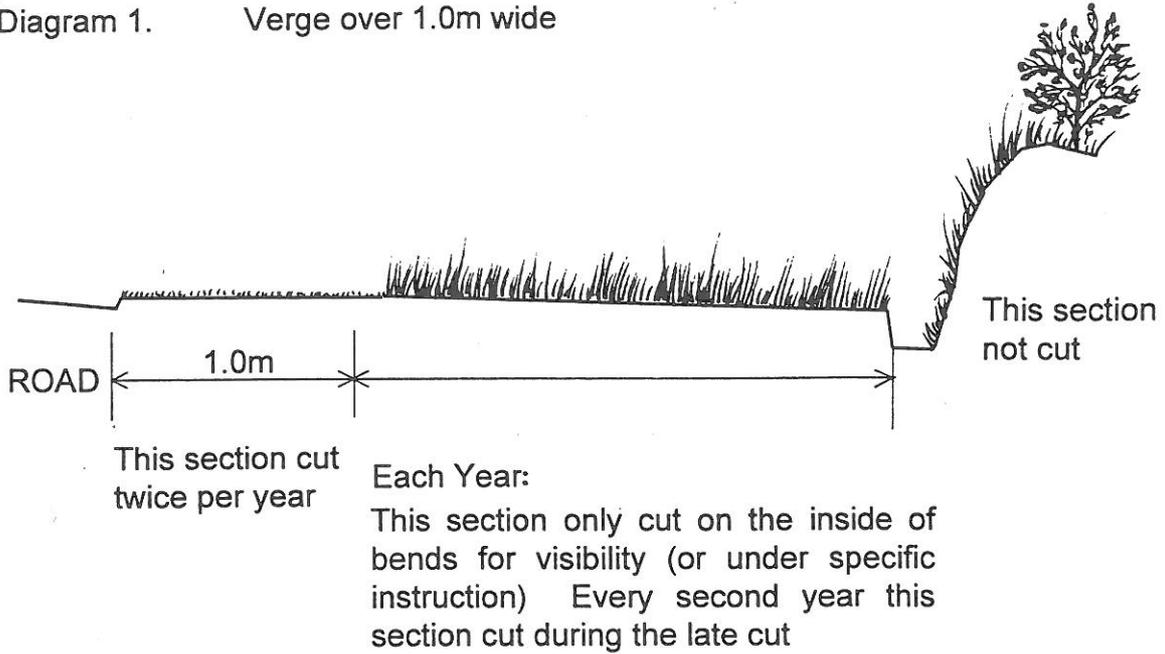
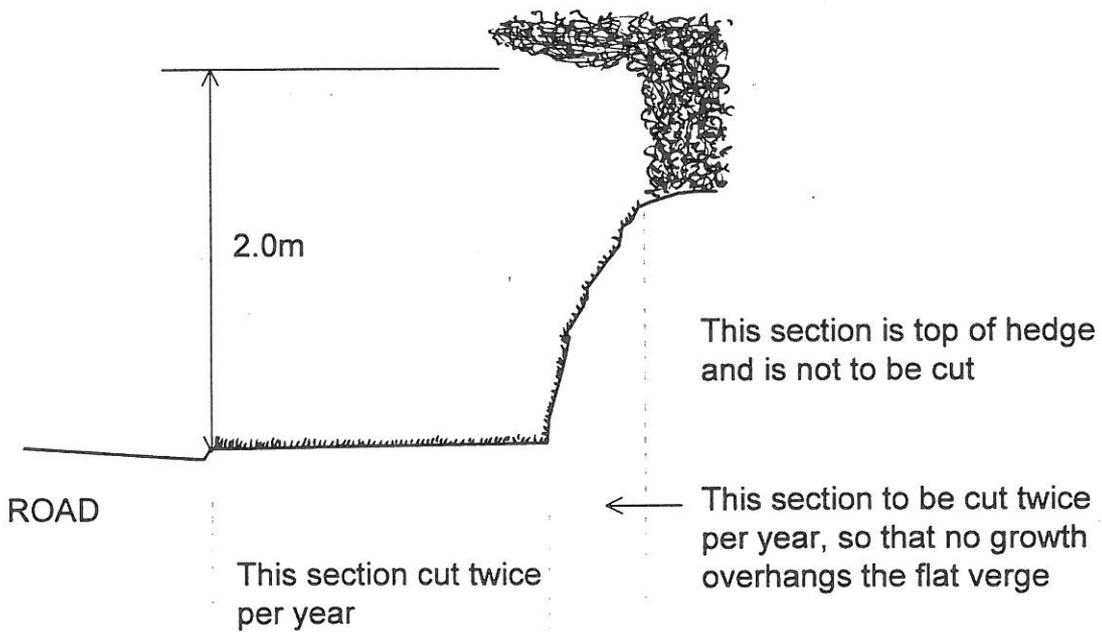


Diagram 2. Verge under 1.0m wide





SENSITIVE VERGE

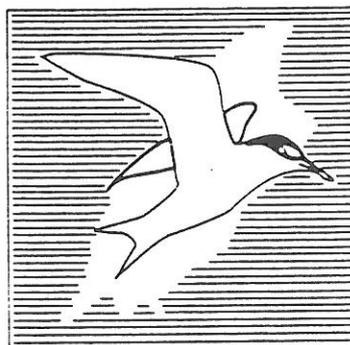
This verge
is specially managed
for its
wildlife interest

FOR FURTHER DETAILS TEL: 801985



Isle of Man
Government

Department
of
Transport
Rheynn Arrághey



M A N X
N A T U R E
C O N S E R V A T I O N
T R U S T



CONSERVATION VERGE

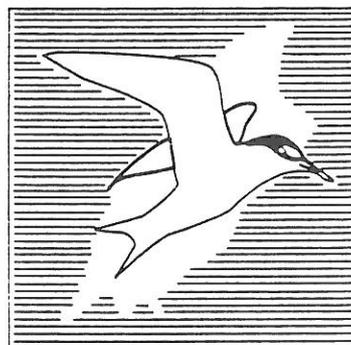
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Department
of
Transport
Rheynn Arraghey



M A N X
N A T U R E
C O N S E R V A T I O N
T R U S T

Number	Location	Type	Species	Map ref.	Management
C1	D51 Earystane	C	Meadow Flora	SC 234718	Both sides cut at the end of August Remove cuttings No spraying
C2	U7 Curragh Road	C	Curragh Flora	SC 360952	Late cut in September No spraying
C3	D66 Upper Rencell Hill	C	Meadow Flora	SC 305783	Both sides cut at the end of August/early September Remove cuttings Control willows and scrub on the plantation side of the road No spraying
C4	A27 Sileau Mooar, Dalby Mountain	C	Meadow Flora	SC 233765	Both sides cut at the end of August Remove cuttings No spraying
C5	C5 Cronk y Voddy	C	Meadow Flora	SC 300860	Both sides cut at the end of July No spraying
C6	C20 Ballacorris	C	Meadow Flora	SC 315740	South side only cut at end of August Remove cuttings No spraying
C7	D7 West Craig Loop Road	C	Meadow Flora	SC 388967	Cut at end of August Remove cuttings No spraying
C8	D11 Narradale Road	C	Meadow Flora	SC 396943	Both sides cut at end of August Remove cuttings No spraying
C9	D19 Little London	C	Meadow Flora	SC 305857	Both sides cut at end of August

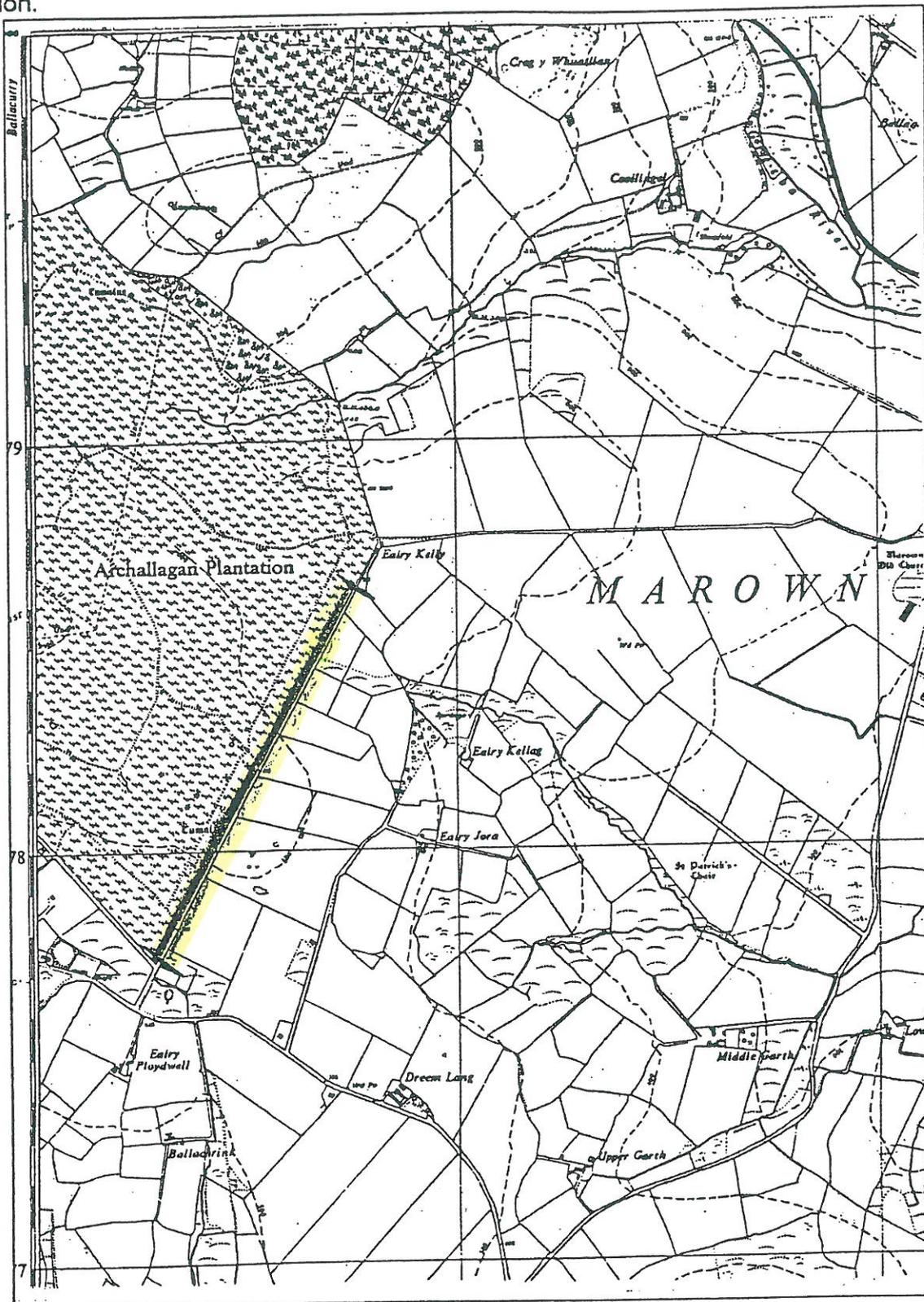
Sheet1

S1	C37 Druidale Cairn	S	Neutral Grassland/Mire	SC 353879	No management	Remove cuttings No spraying
S2	A5 Fishers Hill	S	<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	SC 245687	Both sides cut after mid September	
S3	A13 Jurby Road	S	<i>Genista tinctoria</i>	SC 420955	Both sides cut after mid September	
S4	C27 Cornaa Shore	S	Woodland species	SC 361901	Both sides cut after mid July No spraying	
S5	A26 St. Marks	S	<i>Knautia arvensis</i>	SC 296735	East side cut after mid September	
S6	A27 Glen Rushen	S	Heath/Acid Grassland	SC 240759	Trim back only when needed, every 3 years	
S7	D48 Niarbyl Road	S	Maritime Species	SC 215780	South side cut late August - September	
S8	U62 Balnahowe Road	S	Heathland	SC 190680	No cut	
S9	A16 Point of Ayre	S	Coastal Heath/SSSI	NX 465042	No cut	
S10	C40 Arrasey/Old Mines	S	Heathland	SC 254780	No management, grazed	
S11	D11 Narradale Road	S	Meadow Flora	SC 401987	Both sides cut at end of August	
S12	A27 Silleau Mooar	S	Meadow Flora	SC 231431	Cutting in August Remove cuttings No spraying	
S13	B8 Sulby Claddagh	S	Woodland Flora	SC 388942	Cut at end of July Work required to control the Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed	
S14	D13 Broughjairst Road	S	Meadow Flora	SC 333937	Both sides cut at end of July No spraying	

Sheet1

S15	D28 Gooseneck	S	Meadow Flora	SC 453925	Both sides cut at end of August Remove cuttings No spraying
W1	A2 Baldromma Crossing	-	Wildflower	SC 420804	Cut only bottom 1m width of bank during growing season Rest to be cut after seed season

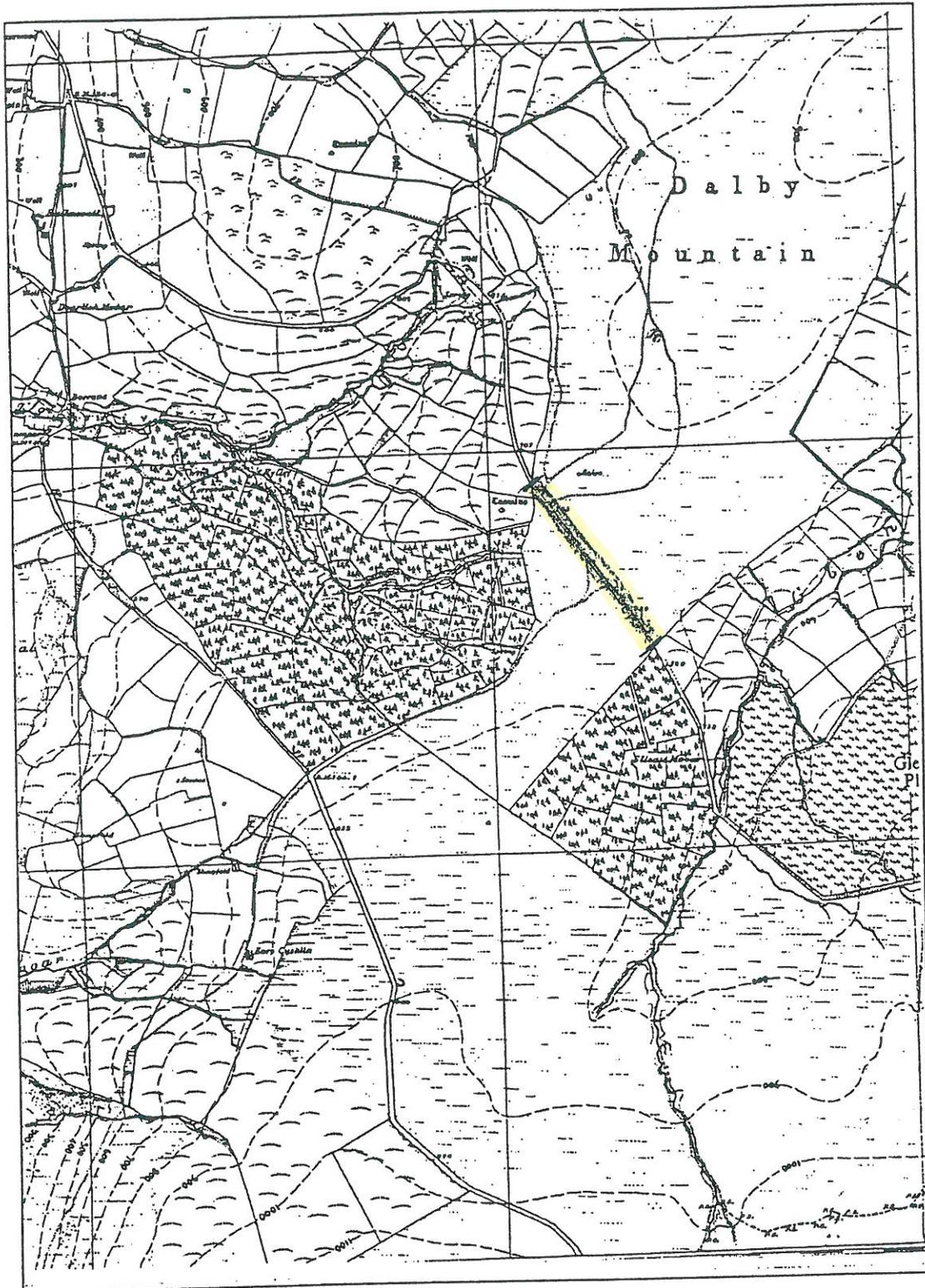
Conservation Verge with species-rich unimproved neutral grassland and mire vegetation.



Map 4 Archallagan Plantation conservation Verge Management

1. Both sides cut at the end of august/early September. Sections lower down the hill were the grassland becomes marshy and is dominated mainly by low growing species, there is no need for an annual cut (Only adjacent to the road).
2. Remove cuttings.
3. Control invasive willows and gorse on the plantation side especially.
4. No spraying.

Conservation verge with species-rich unimproved neutral grassland.

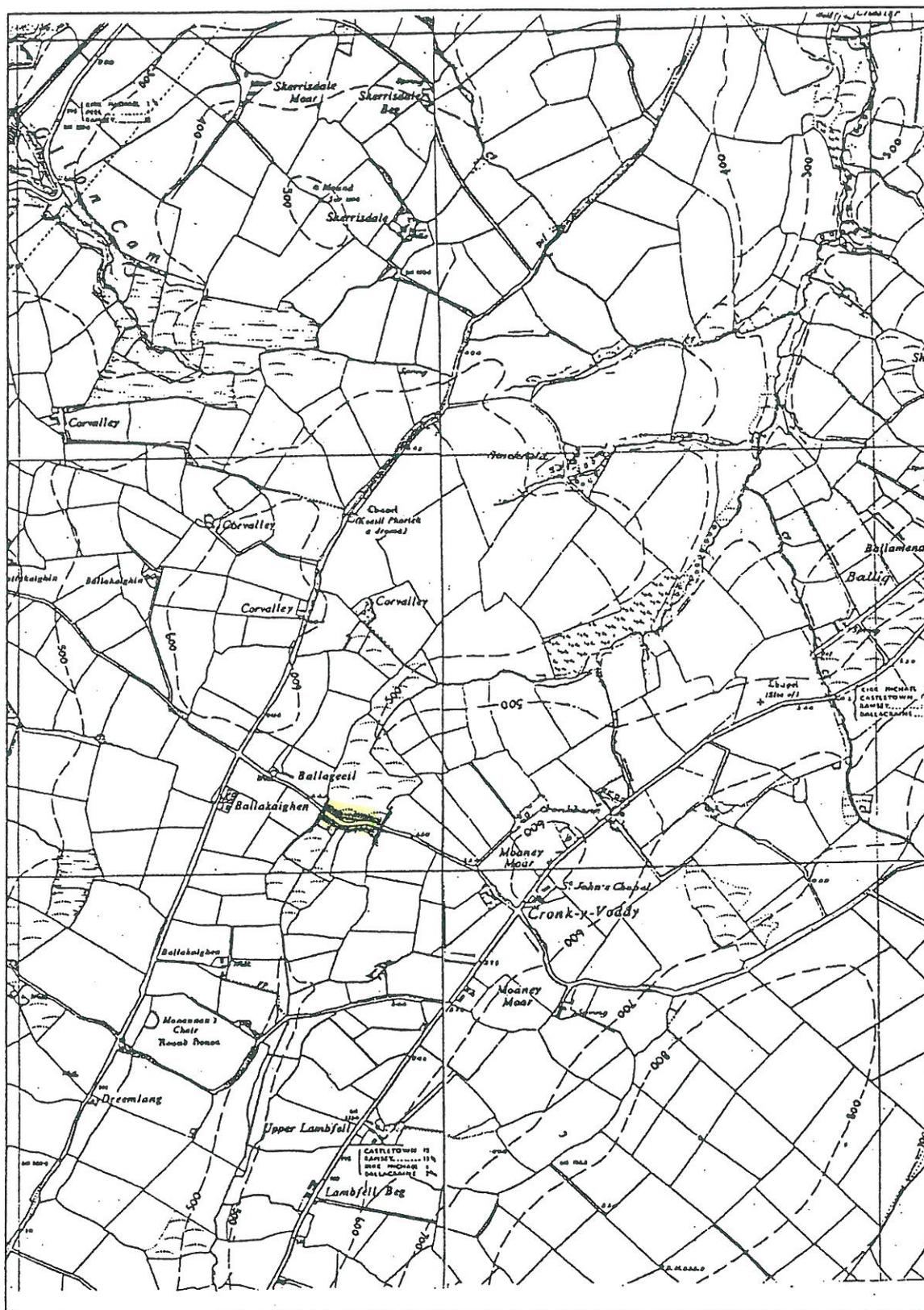


Map 5. Dalby Mountain conservation Verge

Management

1. Both sides to be cut at the end of August.
2. Remove cuttings.
3. No spraying.
4. Control injurious weeds as necessary.

Conservation Verge with meadow flora and scrub.

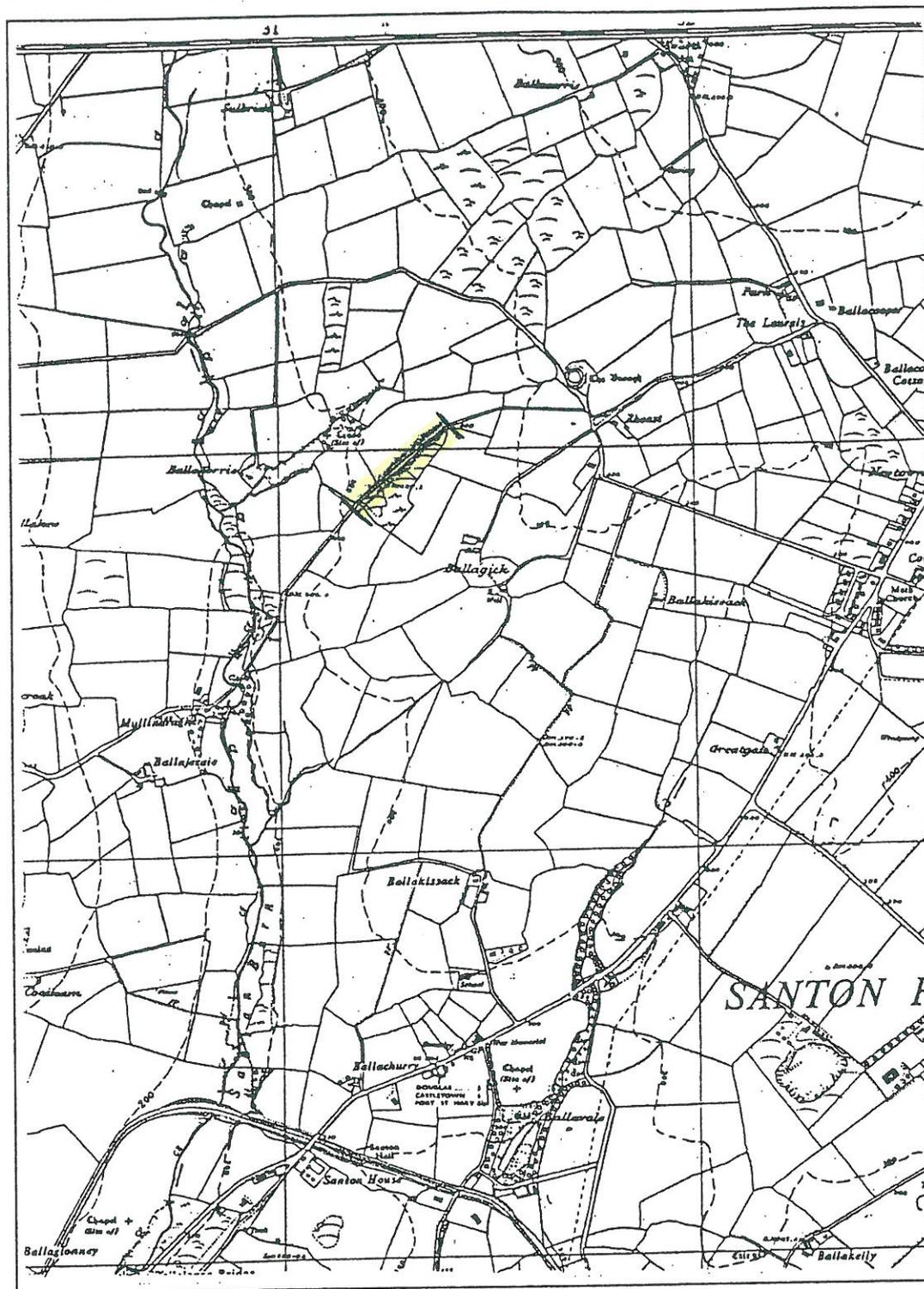


Map 8 Cronk y Voddy Conservation Verge

Management

1. Both sides cut at the end of July
2. No spraying.
3. Control injurious weeds as necessary

Conservation Verge with neutral species-rich unimproved grassland.



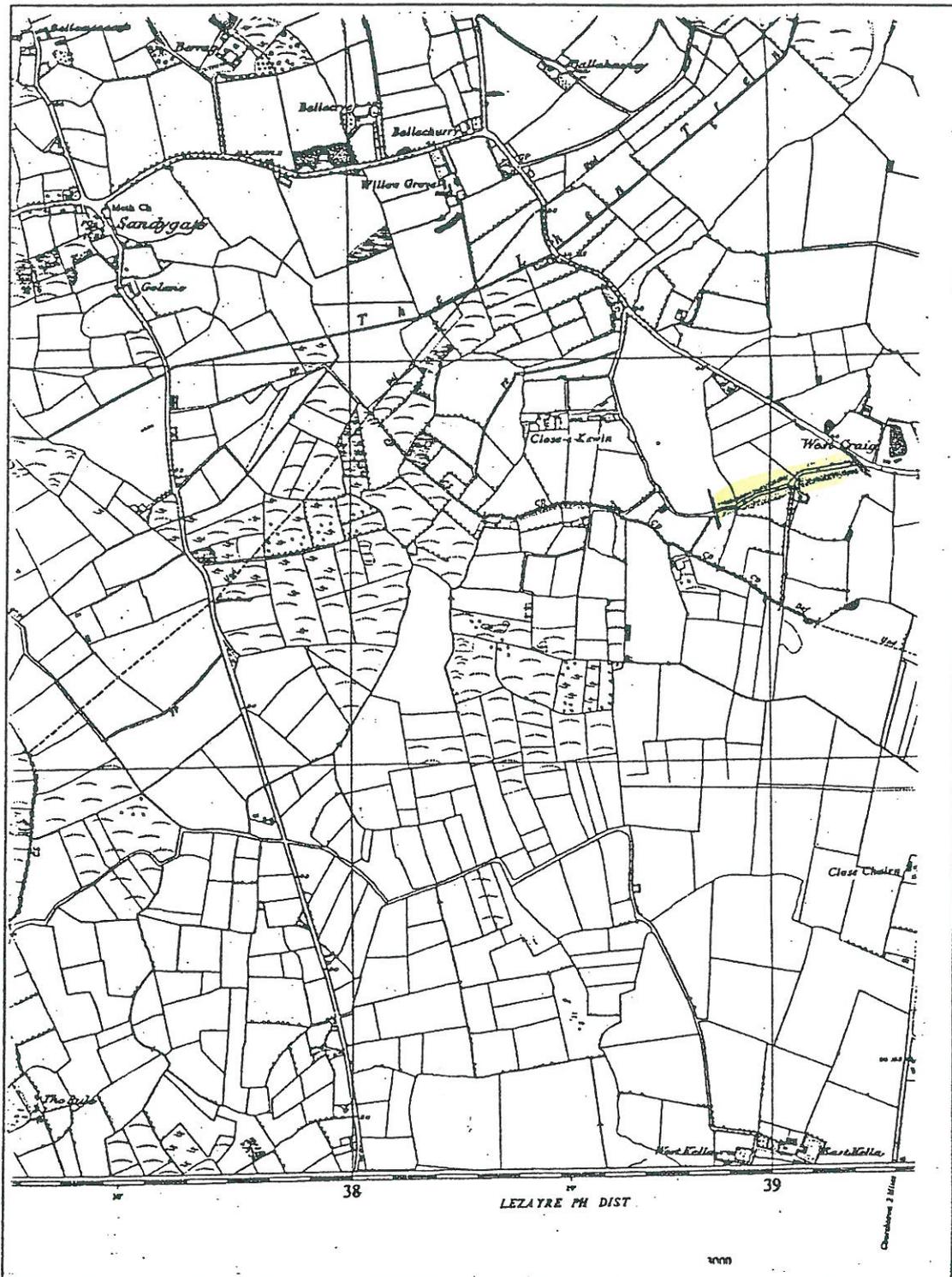
Map 9. Ballacorris Conservation Verge

Management

1. South side only cut at the end of August.
2. Remove cuttings.
3. No spraying.
4. Control injurious weeds as necessary.
5. Clear ditches as required by DoT.

D7 West Craig Loop Road

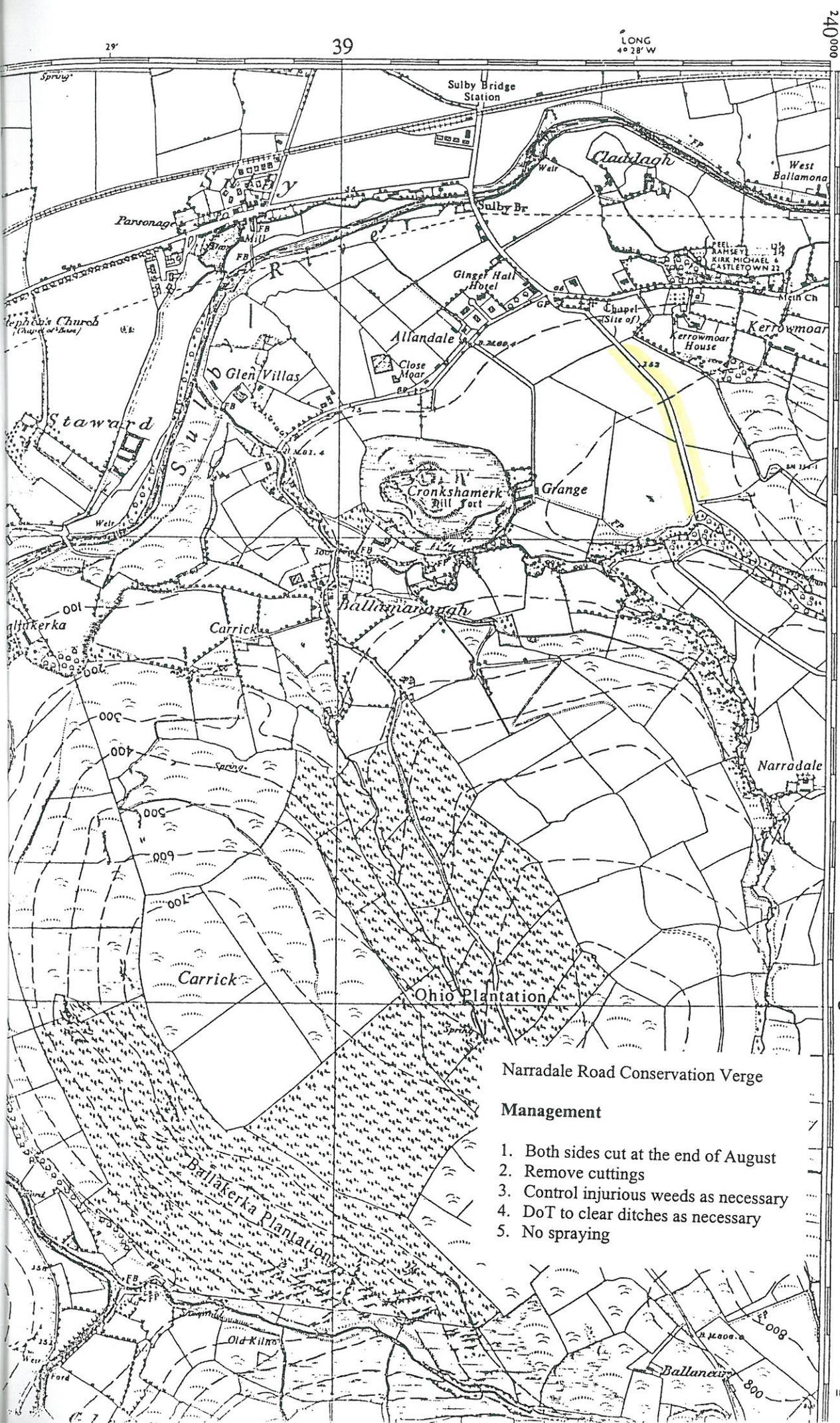
Conservation Verge with species-rich neutral unimproved grassland



Map 10 West Craig conservation Verge

Management

1. Cut at the end of August.
2. Remove cuttings.
3. No spraying.
4. Control injurious weeds as necessary.
5. Clear ditch as required by DoT



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495000

2 Miles

Ramsey 3 1/2 Miles

LAT 54° 19' 94

93

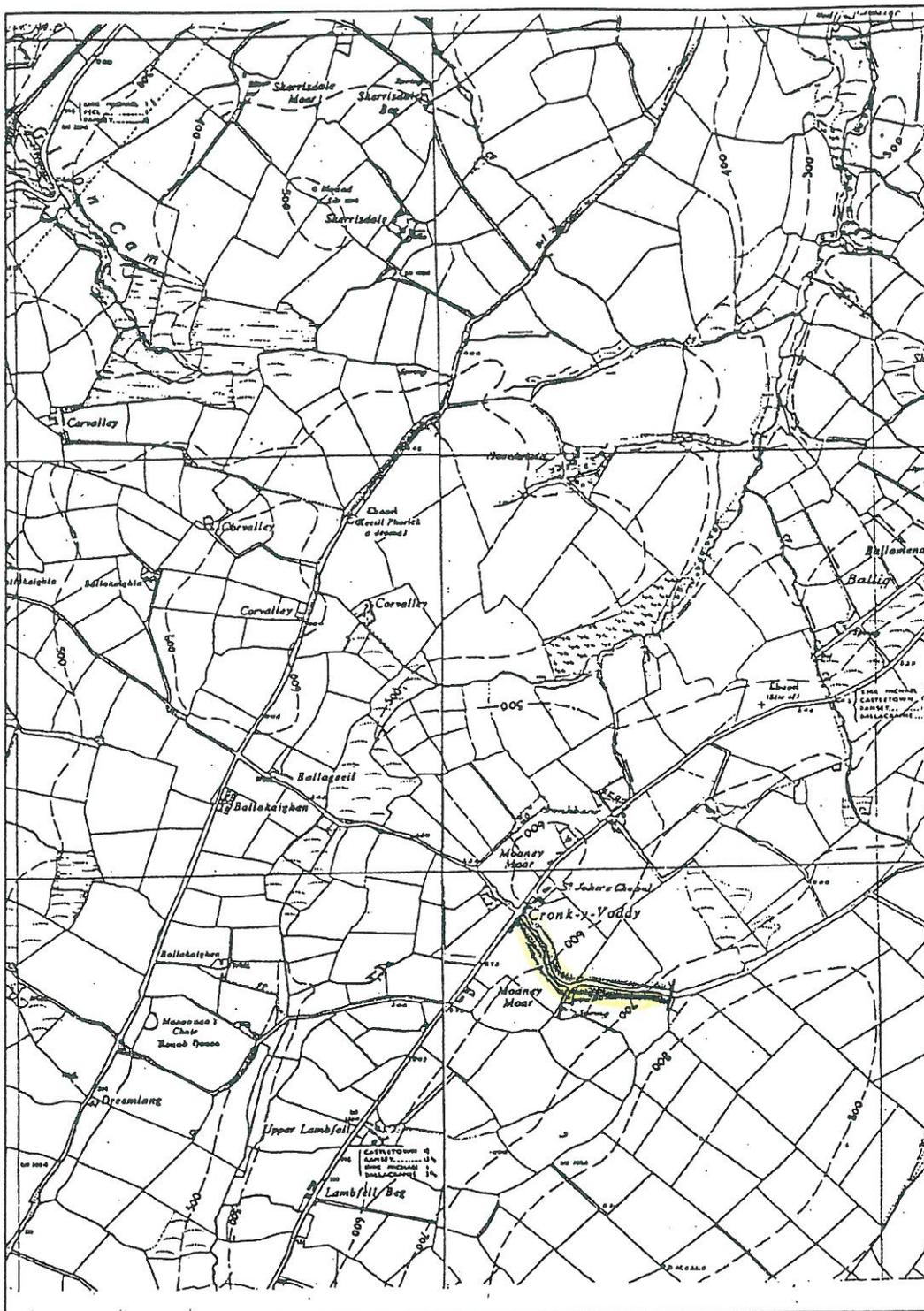
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Narradale Road Conservation Verge

Management

1. Both sides cut at the end of August
2. Remove cuttings
3. Control injurious weeds as necessary
4. DoT to clear ditches as necessary
5. No spraying

Conservation Verge with meadow flora and associated ditch flora



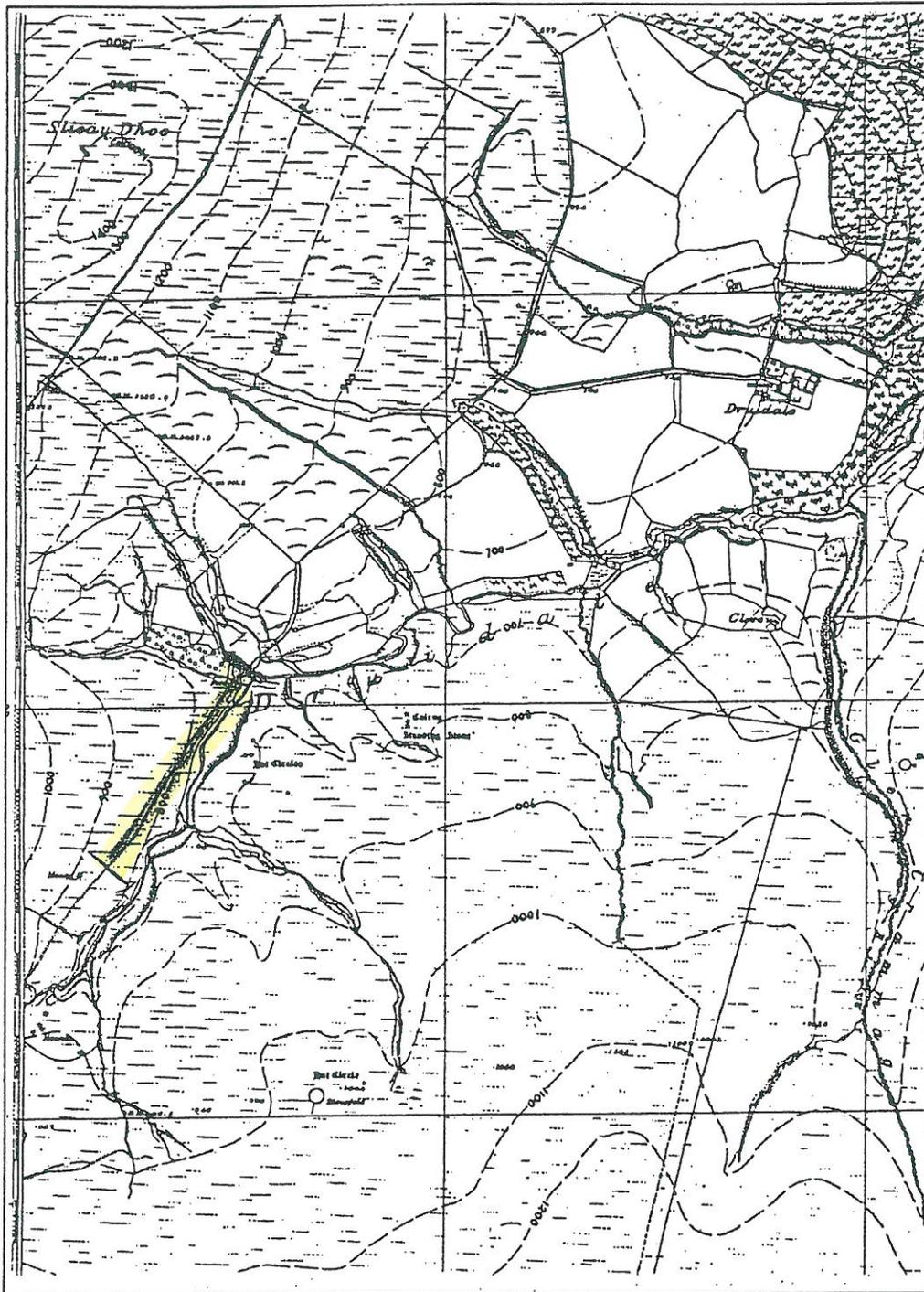
Map 14 Little London Conservation Verge

Management

1. Both side cut at the end of August
2. Remove cuttings
3. No spraying
4. Control injurious weeds as necessary
5. Clear ditches as required by DoT

C37 Druidale Cairn

Sensitive Verge with acid grassland and wet heath communities



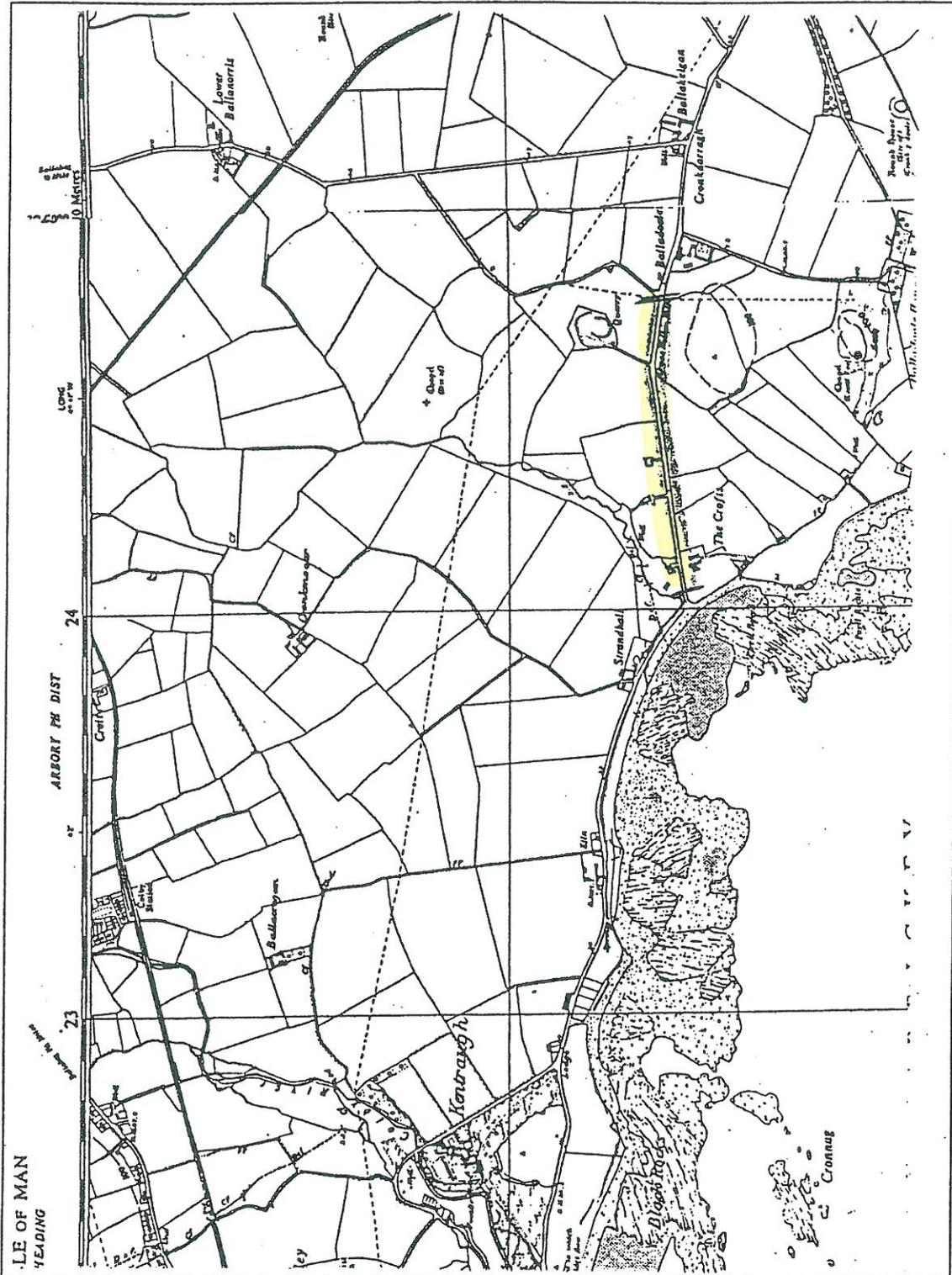
Map 15 Druidale Sensitive Verge

Management

No cut (only necessary if vegetation encroaches onto to highway).
Ditches to be cleared as required by DoT.

A5 Fishers Hill

Sensitive Verge with abundant Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*)



Map 16 Fishers Hill Sensitive Verge

Management

Both sides to be after mid-September.

Jurby Road
Conservation Verge

Management

Both sides to be cut
after mid September

Department of Transport
Rheynn Arraghey

B W Hannay

BSc(Hons), MSc, CEng,
MICE, MIHT, CDipAF

Director of Highways & Traffic



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Job Title:

Drawing Title:

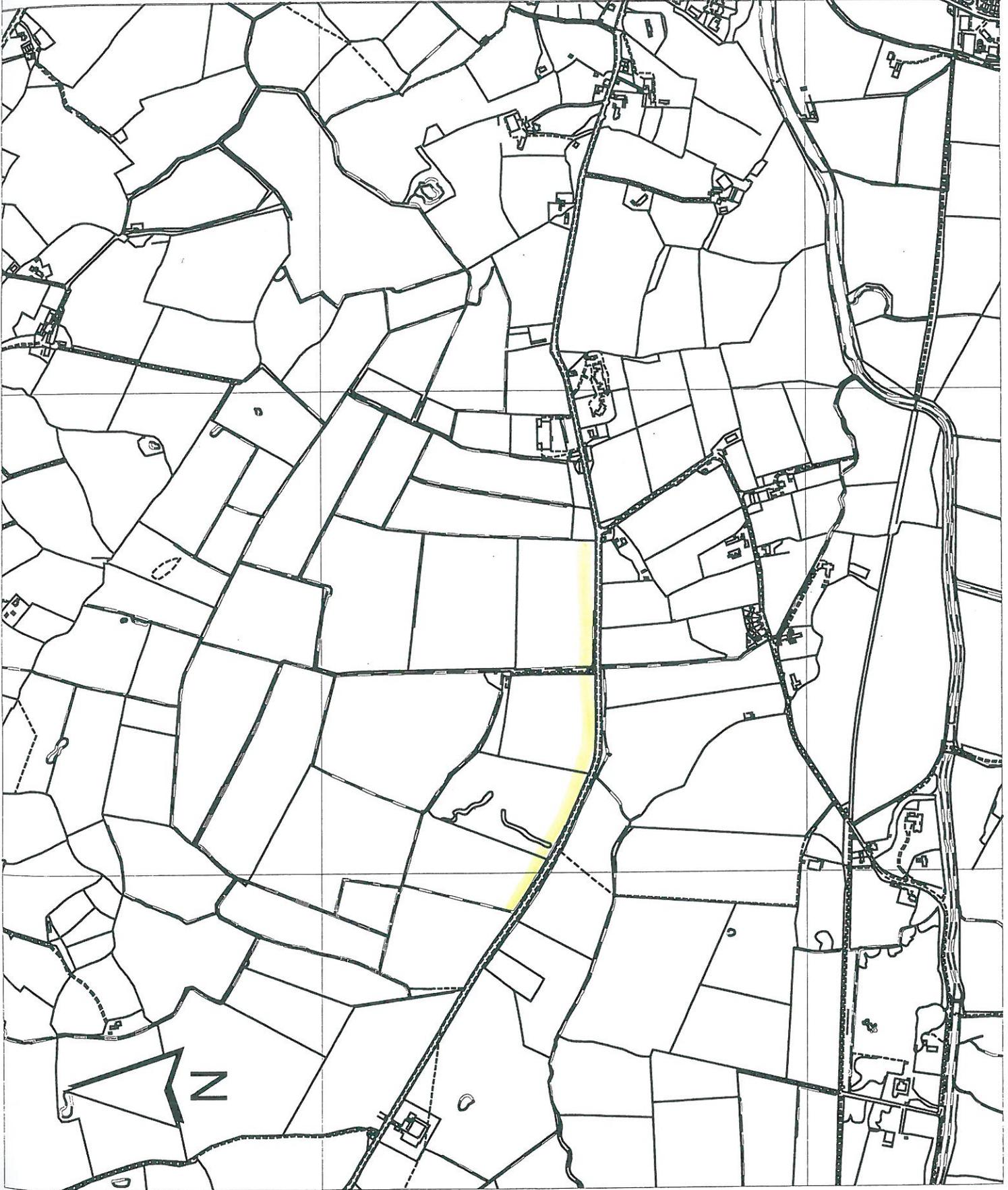
Jurby Road

Date:

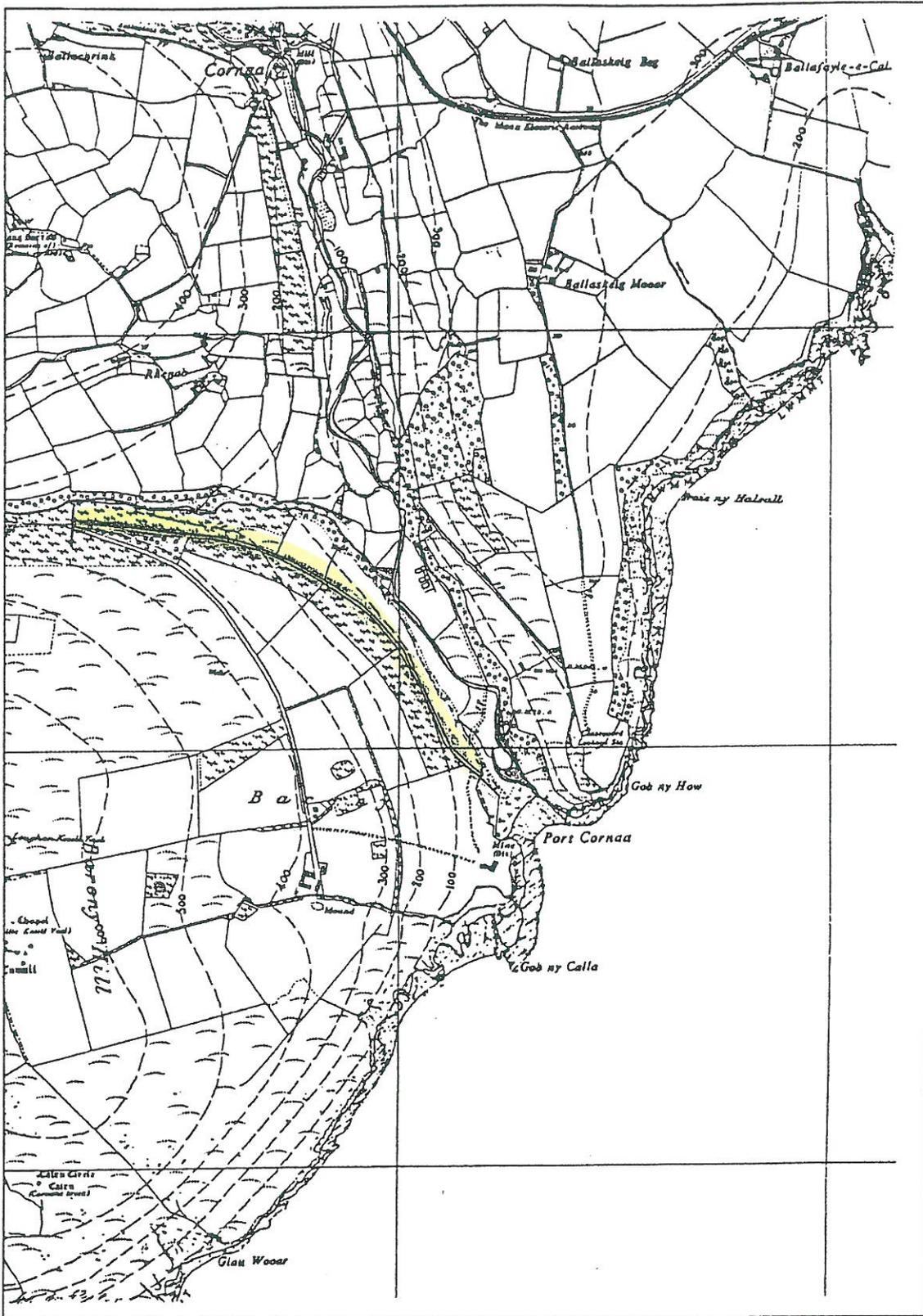
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Sensitive Verge with woodland flora



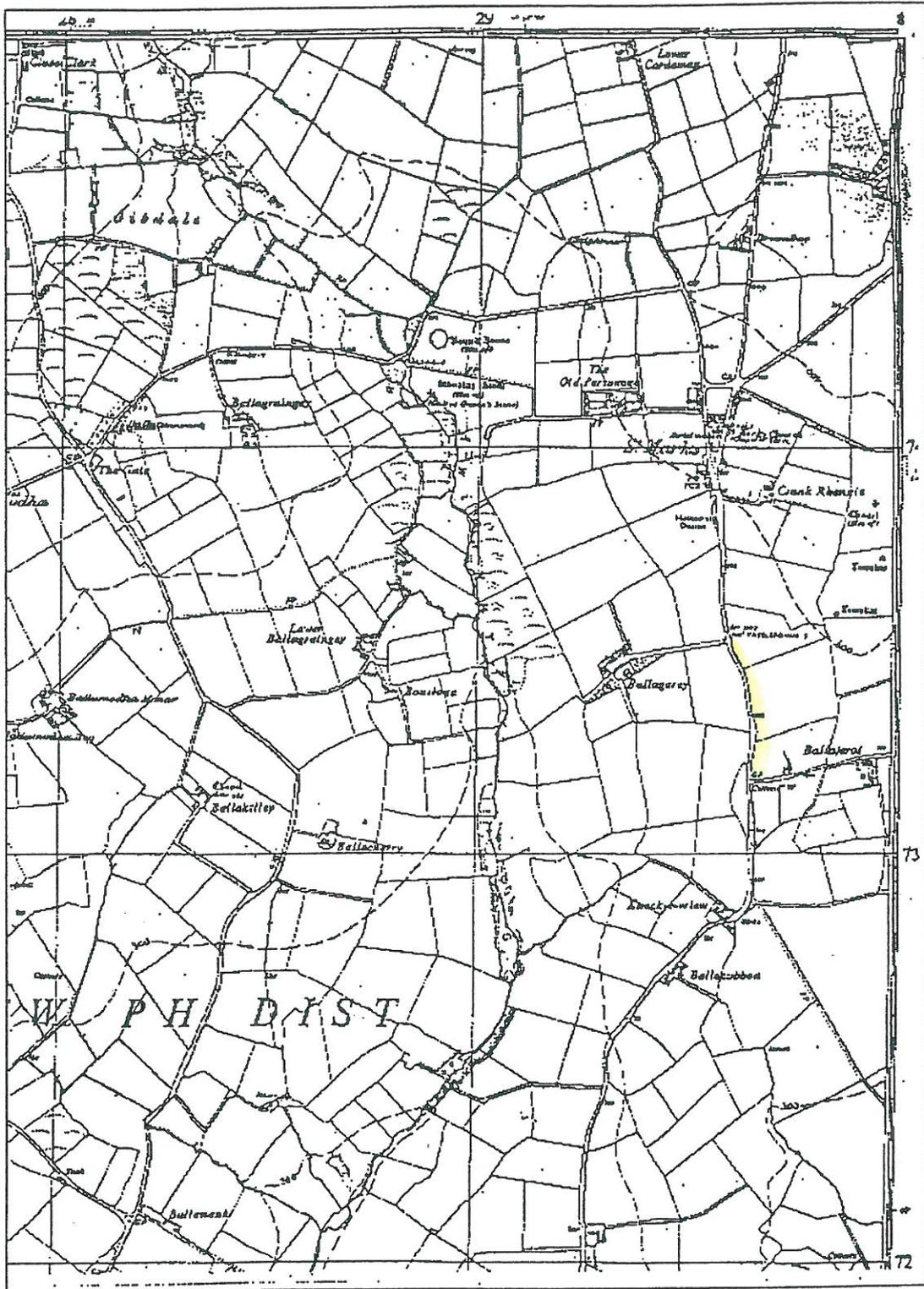
Map 18 Port Comaa Sensitive Verge

Management

Both sides cut any time after mid-July.

A26 St Marks

Sensitive Verge with abundant Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*)



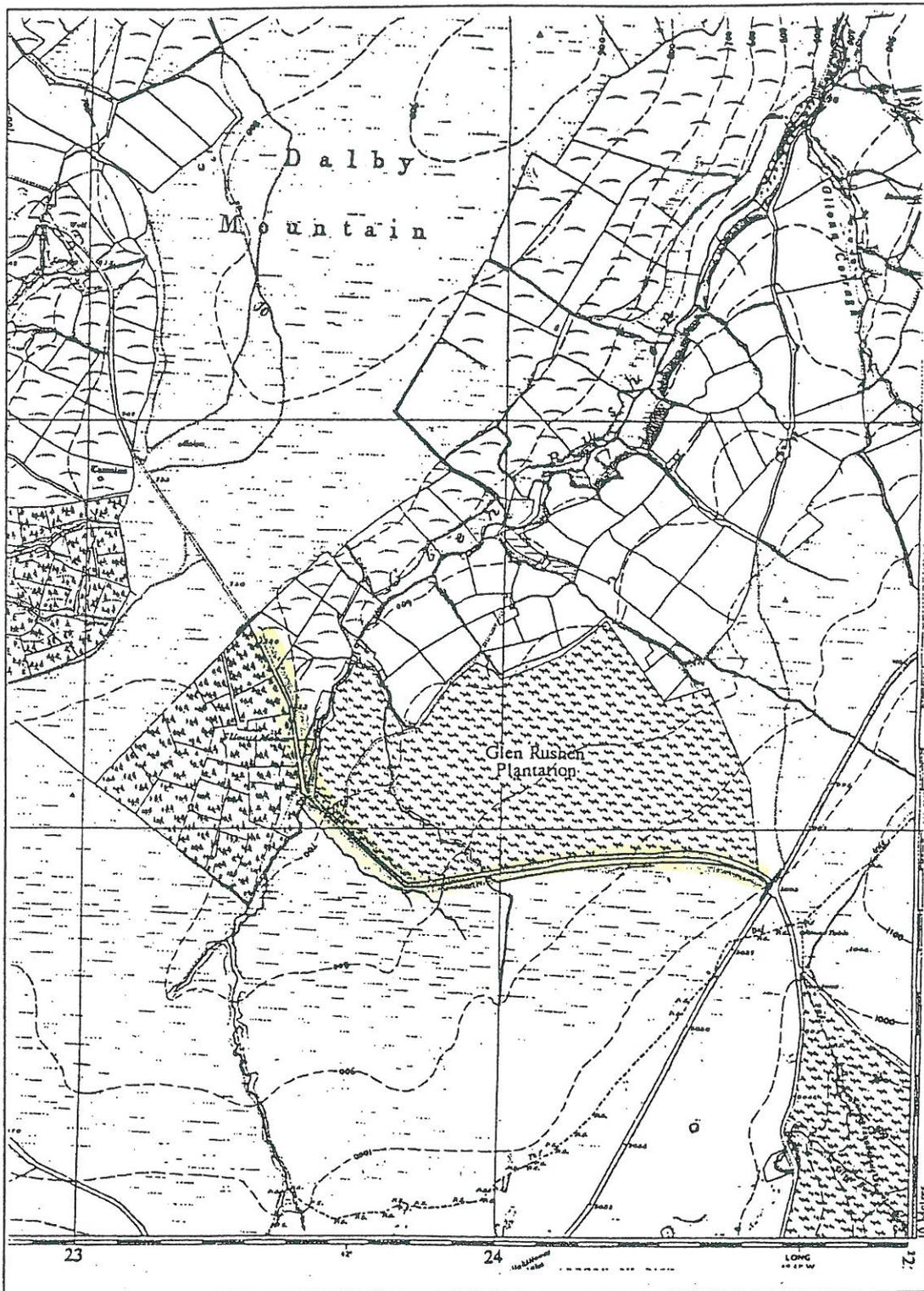
Map 19 St Marks Sensitive Verge

Management

East side cut after mid-September.

A27 Glen Rushen

Sensitive Verge with Heathland and acid grassland mosaic



Map 20 Glen Rushen sensitive Verge

Management

Trim back shrubs only when necessary (every 3-5 years).

The verge is a popular site for billberry picking (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), any cutting should be after the billberries have fruited, this is usually mid-October.

Sensitive Verge with heathland species



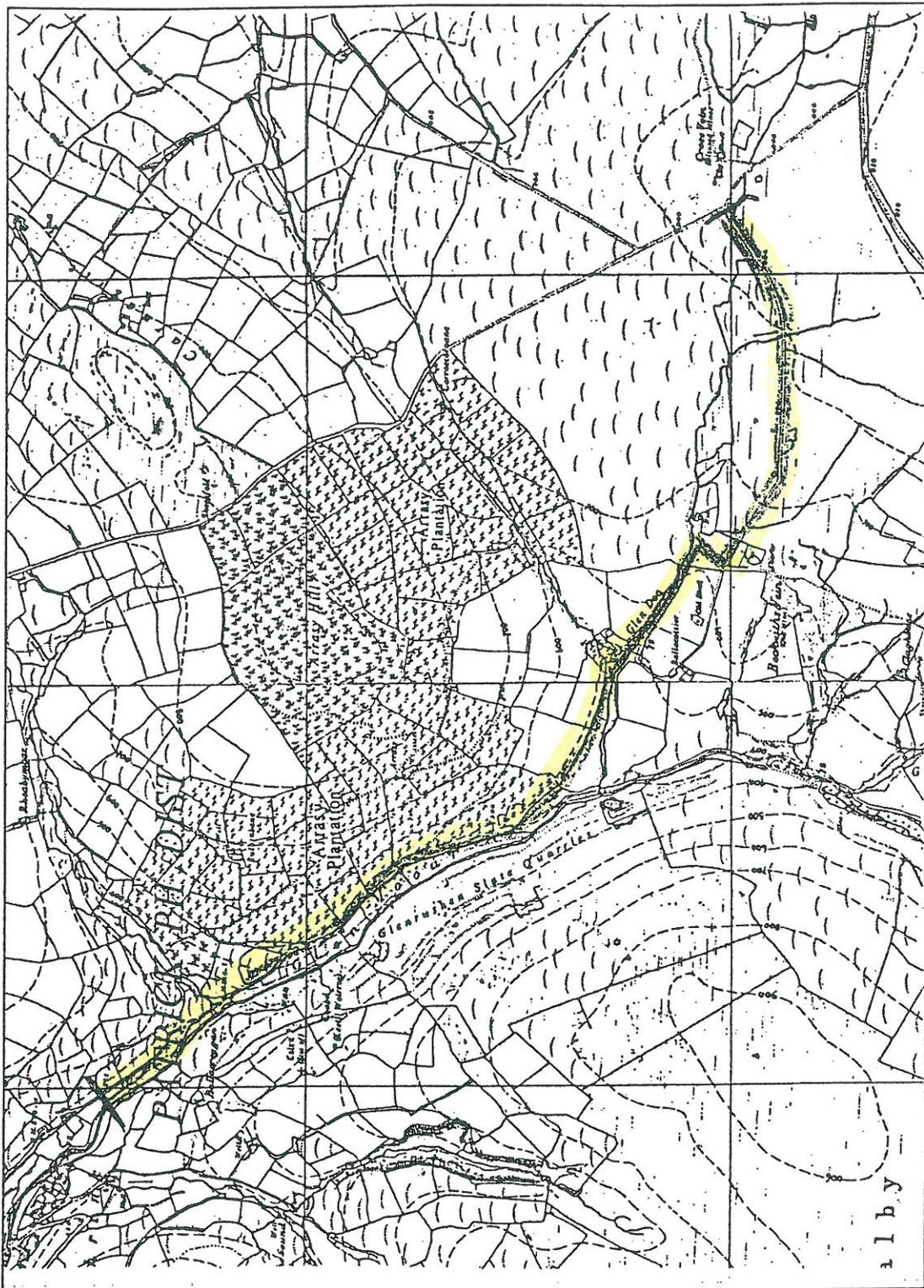
Map22 Ballnowne Sensitive Verge

Management

- 1.No cut (Unless vegetation encroaches onto highway).
- 2.No spraying.

C40 Old Mines/Arrassey Plantation

Sensitive Verge with Heathland Flora



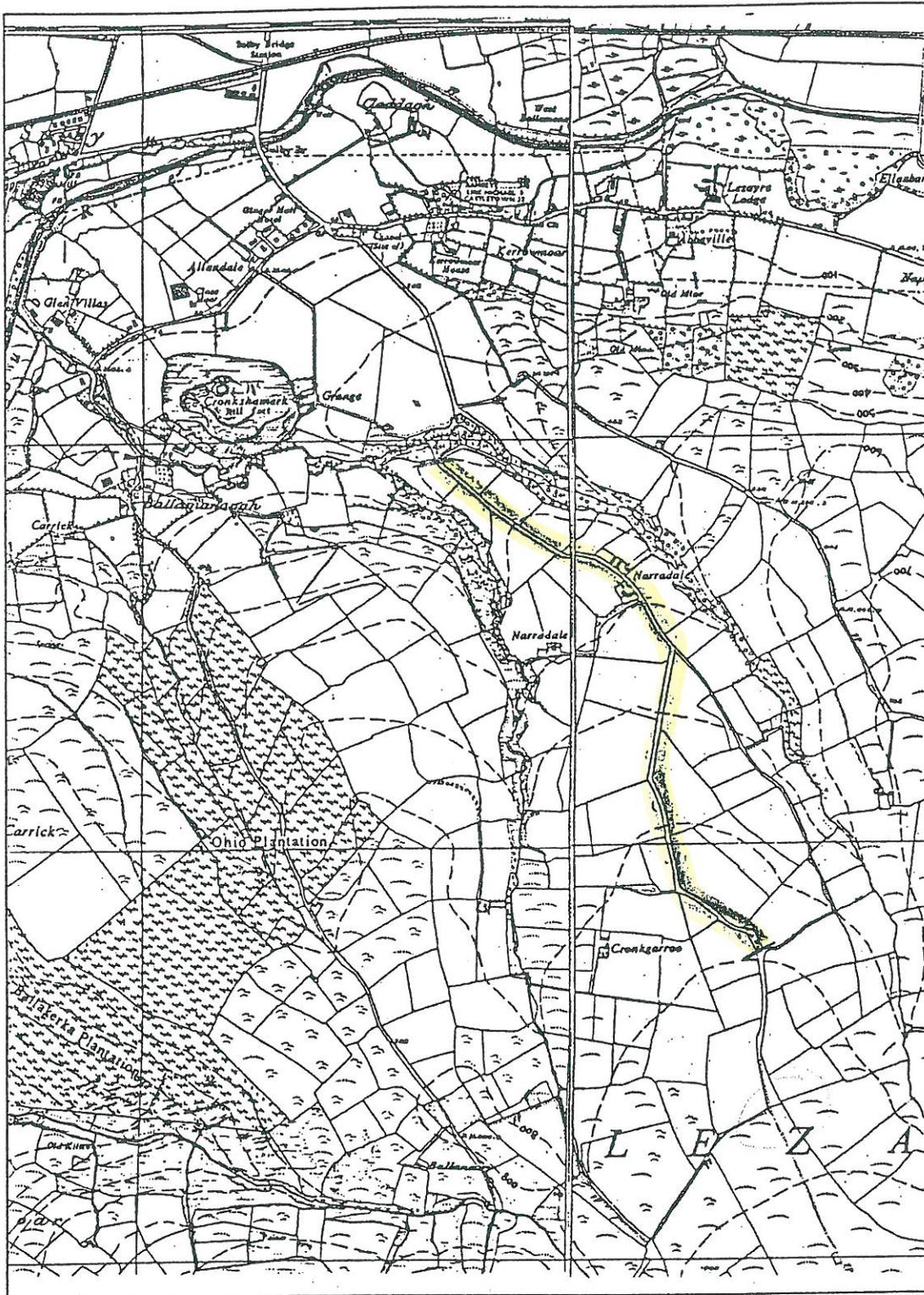
Map 24 Arrassey/Old Mines Sensitive Verge

Management

1. The DoT does not cut the verges supporting heathland vegetation.
2. The verges on the lower sections of the road are cut periodically to allow access.
3. No spraying.

D11 Narradale Road

Sensitive Verge with meadow flora

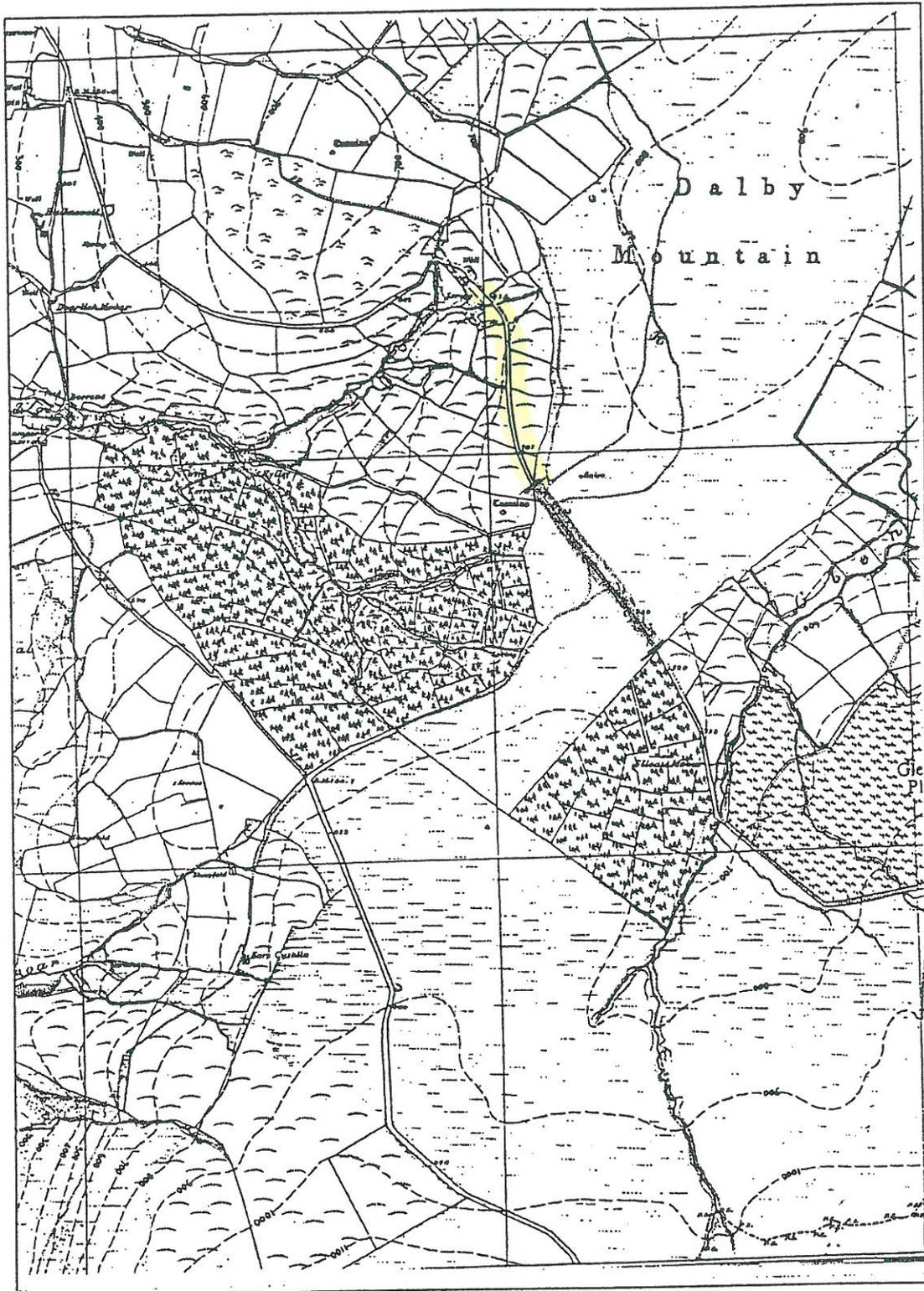


Map 26 Narradale Sensitive Verge

Management

1. Both sides cut at end of August
2. No spraying

~~Conservation~~ Sensitive verge with species-rich unimproved neutral grassland.

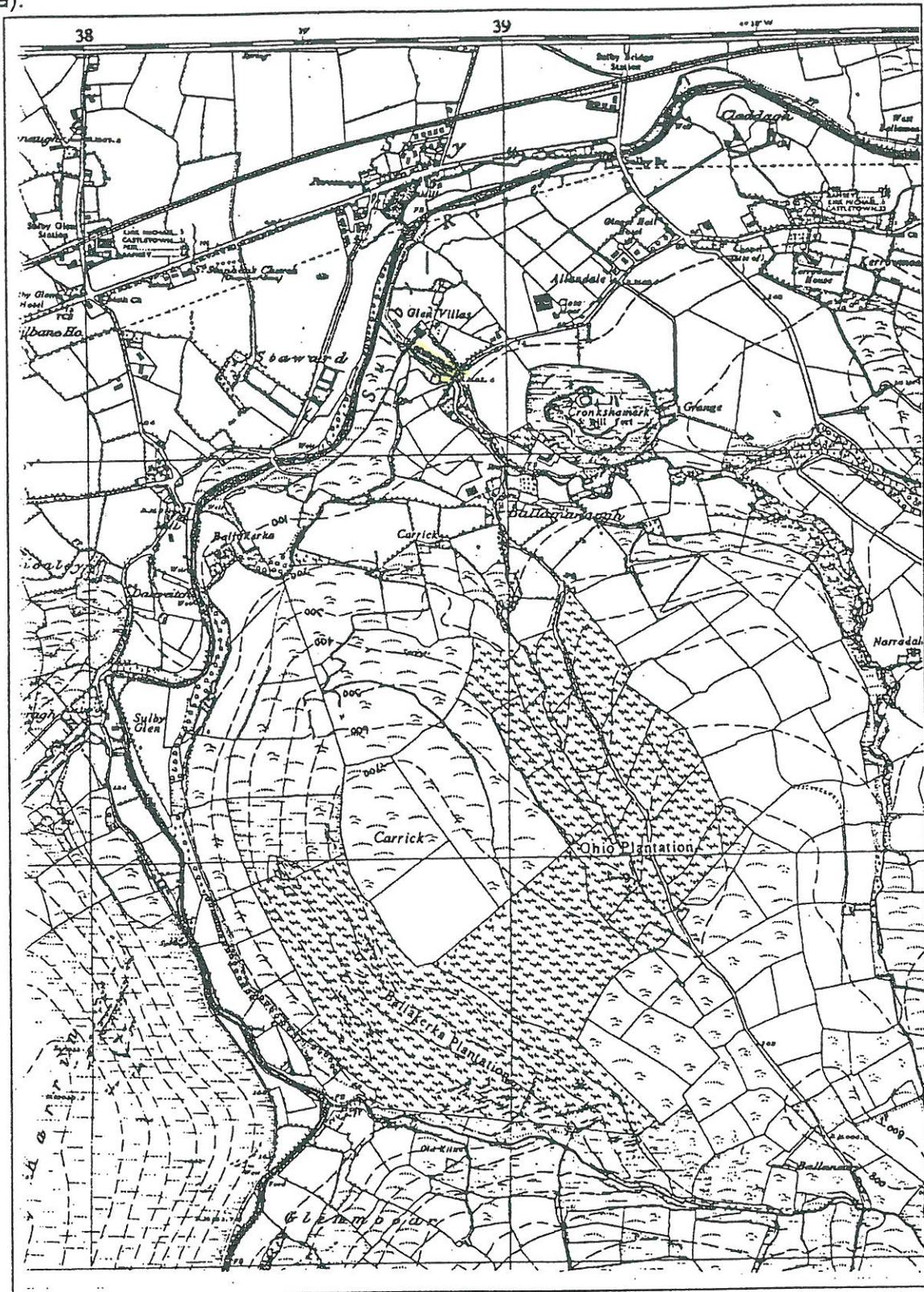


Map 5. Dalby Mountain conservation Verge

Management

1. Both sides to be cut at the end of August.
2. Remove cuttings.
3. No spraying.
4. Control injurious weeds as necessary.

Sensitive verge with Woodland flora including two Manx Red Data Book species* ey Report
 wood speedwell (*Veronica montana*) and three-nerved sandwort (*Moehringia
 trinervia*).



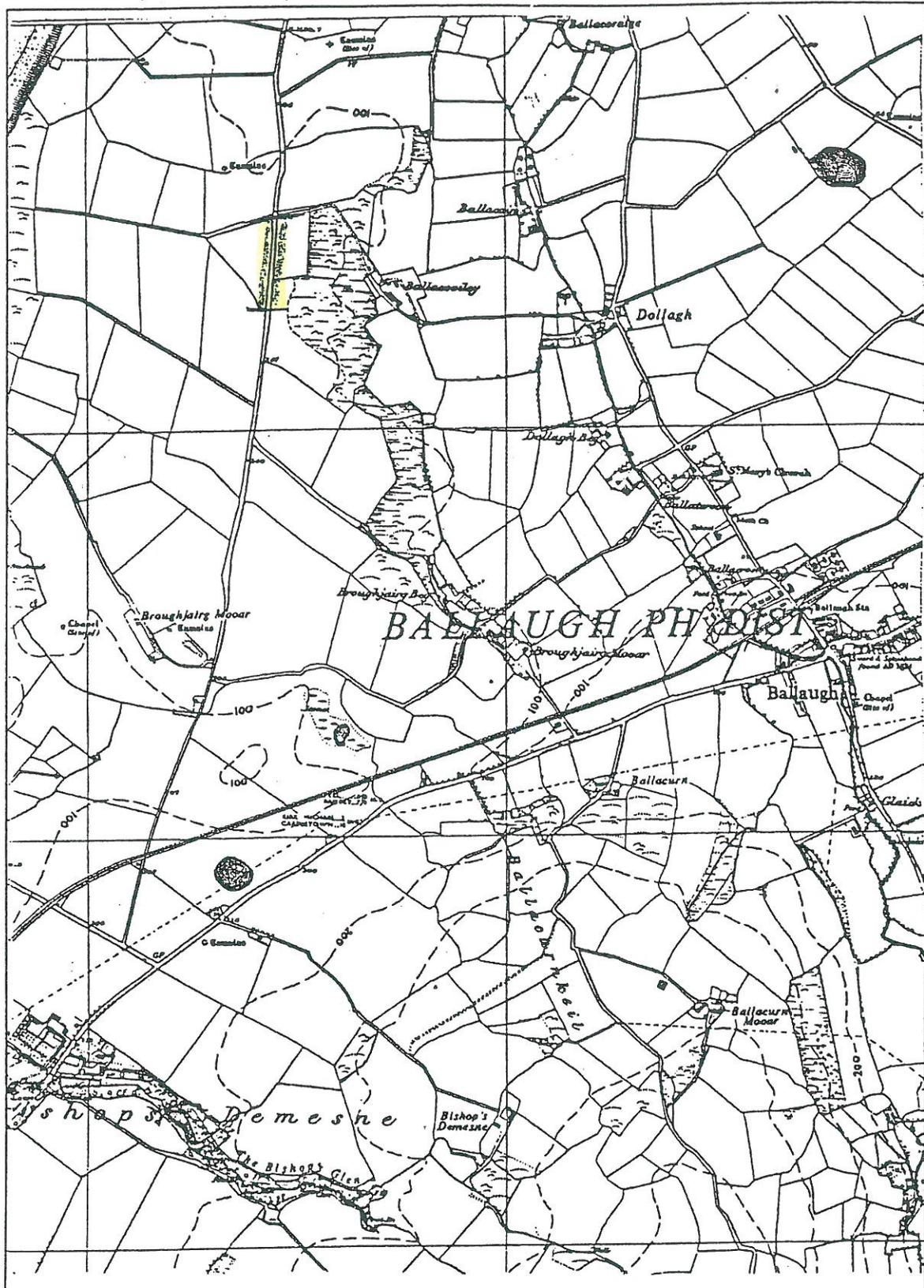
Map 7 Sulby Claddagh Sensitive Verge

Management

Cut at the end of July, riverside only

Work required to control Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

Sensitive Verge with meadow flora and the legally protected species under the Wildlife Act (Species Shepherd's Cress (*Teesdalia nudicaulis*)).



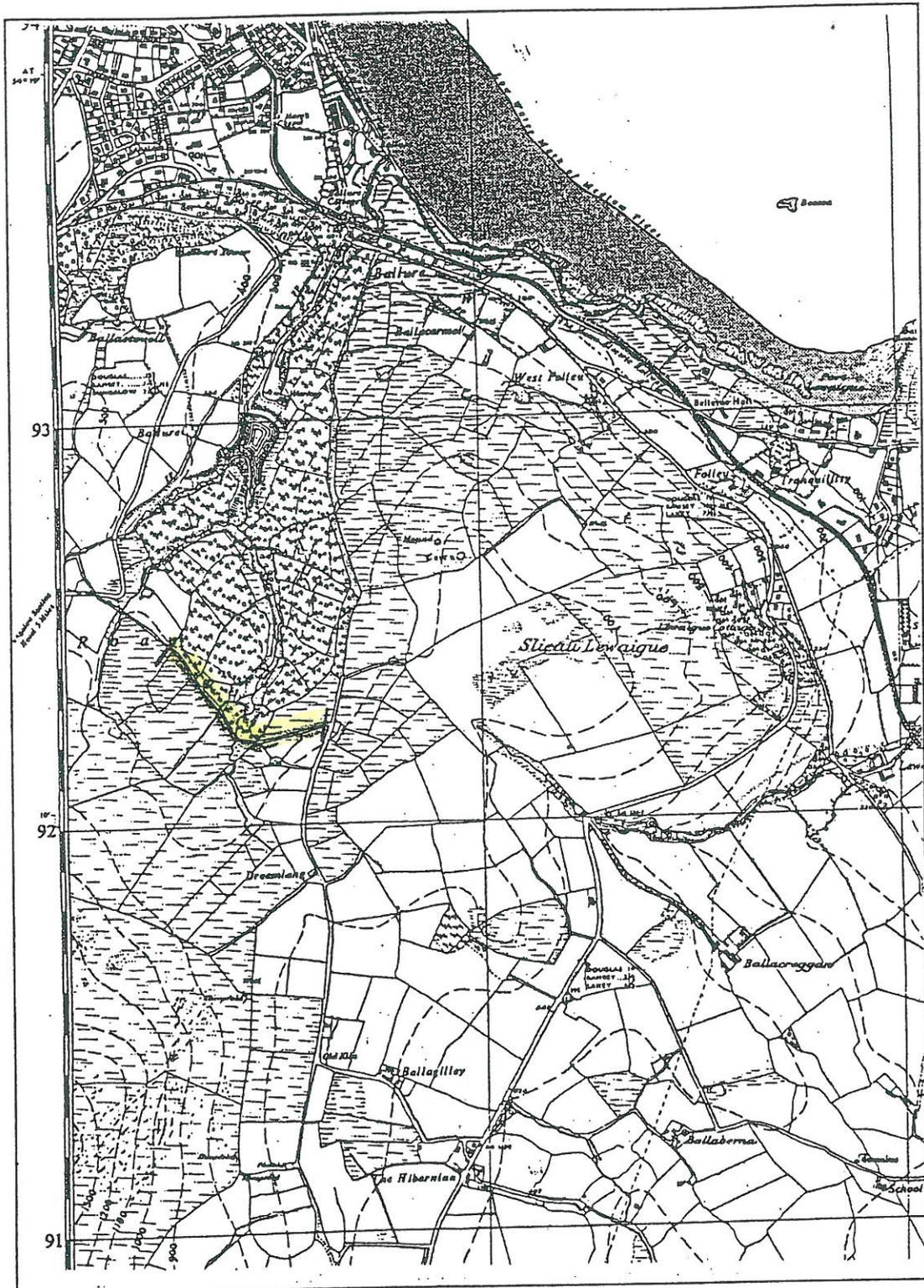
Map 11 Broughjaig Conservation Verge

Management

1. Both sides cut at the end of July
2. No spraying.

D28 Gooseneck

Sensitive Verge with meadow flora and marshy grassland.

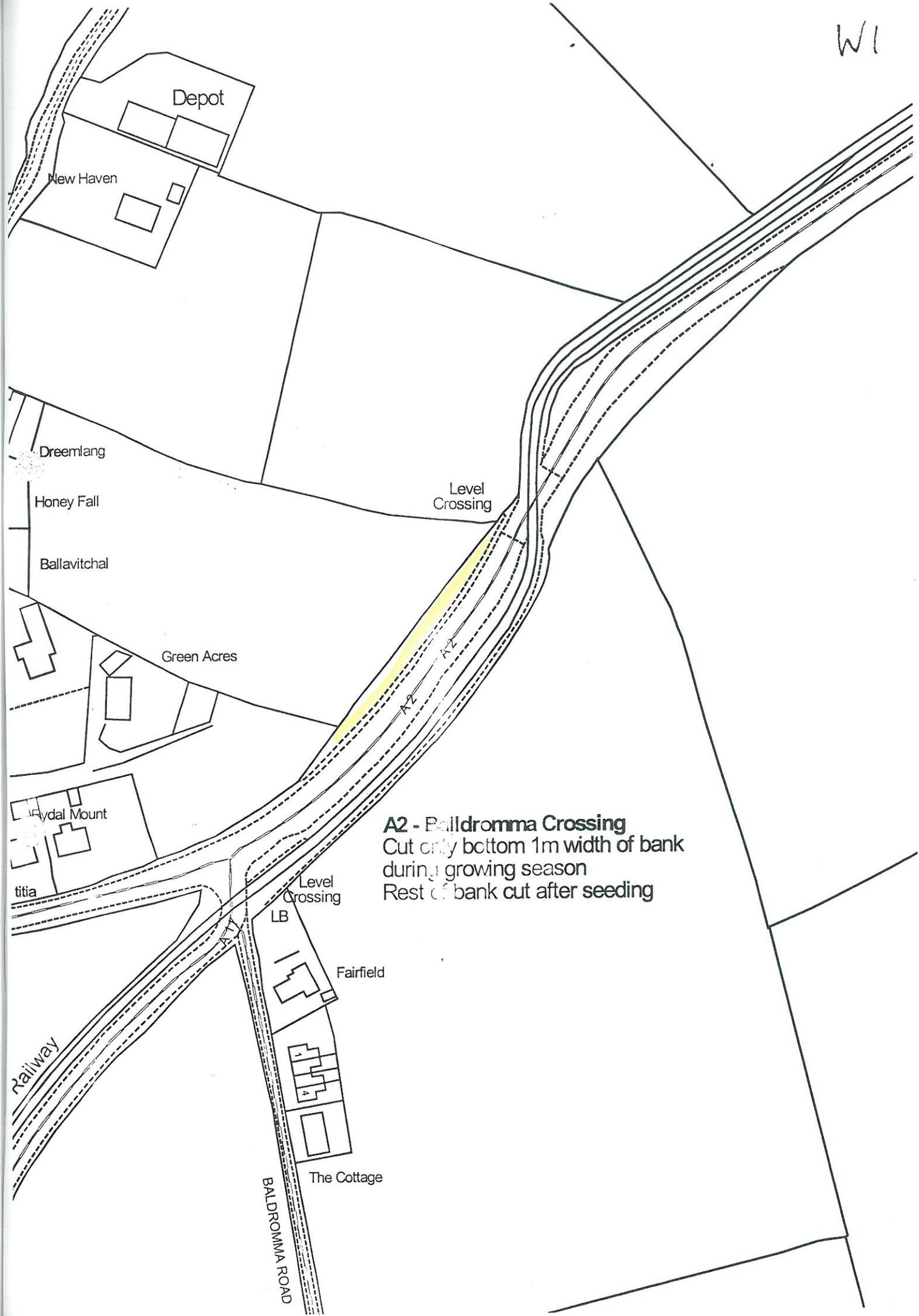


Map 13 The Gooseneck Sensitive Verge

Management

1. Cut at the end of August
2. No spraying

W1



A2 - Baldromma Crossing
 Cut only bottom 1m width of bank
 during growing season
 Rest of bank cut after seeding

BALDROMMA ROAD

Railway

Depot

New Haven

Dreenlang

Honey Fall

Ballavitchal

Green Acres

Rydal Mount

titia

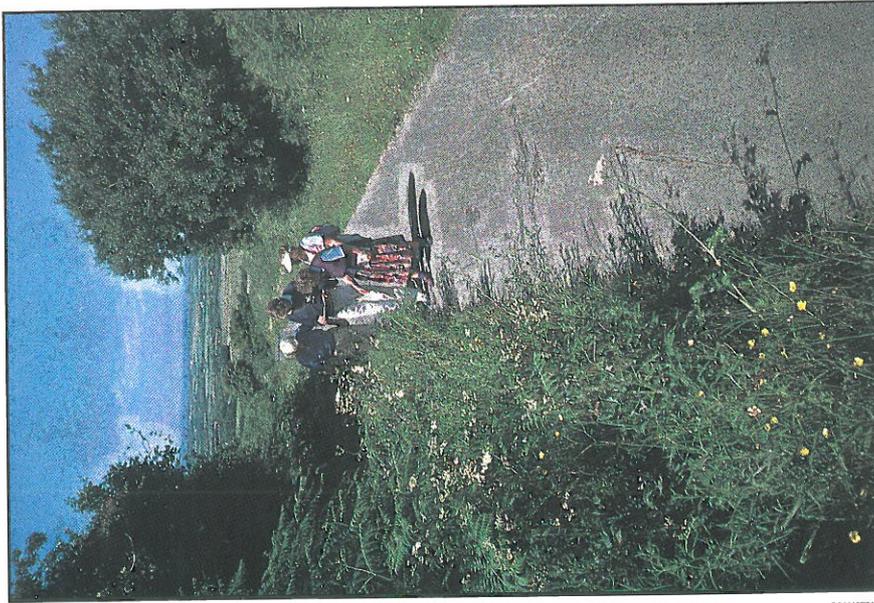
LB

Fairfield

The Cottage

Level Crossing

Level Crossing



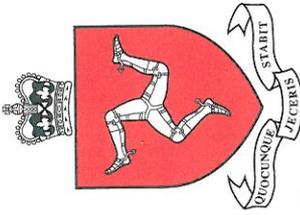
J. Lamb

Verge survey

What you can do

The road verge project will be ongoing with the continual collection of species records hopefully with new discoveries being made. If you would like to take part and carry out a road verge survey yourself or perhaps assist with the monitoring programme on one of the designated verges please contact the MNCT at The Nature Conservation Centre, St John's (01624 801985).

Front cover photograph: Harebell by E. Boyes



Isle of Man Government

Department of Transport

Rheynn Arraghey



A. Scott

Verge trimming

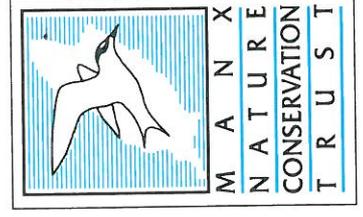
The Verge Survey Project and this leaflet were funded by the Department of Transport.

For more information, please contact the MNCT at:-

Manx Nature Conservation Trust,
The Nature Conservation Centre,
Tynwald Mills, St. John's,
Isle of Man, IM4 3AE.

Telephone: 01624 801985 Fax: 01624 801022
Registered Charity No. 225 IOM Company Registered No. 5297 IOM

Manx Roadside Verges *and* Hedge Banks



wildflower meadows. These include plants such as yellow rattle, eyebright, sneezewort, meadowsweet and wild orchids. Heathland on the higher roads supports heather, bell heather, bilberry and other associated species.

Woodland species flourish on several verges: in early summer it is possible to see sanicle, wood anemone, primrose, wild garlic and bluebells. Curragh (boggy woodland) flora can be found in verges particularly in the north; here bogbean, gypsywort, devil's-bit scabious, purple loosestrife and numerous willows grow. Maritime species such as thrift, spring squill, common scurvygrass and sea plantain colonise coastal verges.



Yellow Rattle

MNCT

R.Lowe



Common Blue Butterfly

Road Verge Survey Project

A joint project between the Manx Nature Conservation Trust and the DoT began in 1996. An Island-wide survey of all rural verges (excluding the TT course) has been undertaken. Over 30,000 plant records were collected and entered onto a database. This will enable the DoT to manage the verges more sympathetically towards conservation. A full report has been produced and several verges have been designated as either **Conservation or Sensitive Verges.**

Conservation and Sensitive Verges are chosen using criteria to evaluate their conservation interest. Each designated verge is marked out with signposts to inform the Department's cutting operators, adjacent landowners and the general public of their whereabouts.

Sensitive Verges are designated according to the presence of a plant or plants that have local, regional or national importance. These verges will be managed by the DoT, as the time of cutting is the crucial factor for successful management. **Conservation Verges** on the other hand have a particularly important assemblage of species. Management regimes for Conservation Verges are more complicated, and for this reason the MNCT will manage them. In many cases this will include removing the cuttings after trimming to prevent a build-up of nutrients and smothering of the vegetation.

Non-designated verges will also be given a management regime. These will be incorporated where possible into the cutting programme undertaken by the DoT each year.

of wildflowers which in turn provide support for a greater number of insects and other wildlife.

MNCT



Sneezewort

(a) Time of trimming
It is crucial to trim the verges after the wildflowers have had a chance to set seed, ensuring next year's flowering and supporting a viable population.

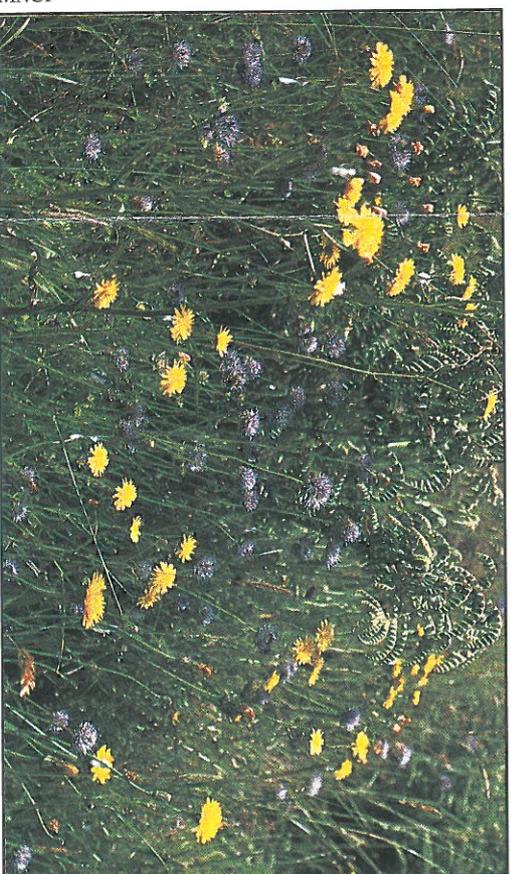
(b) Severity of trimming
The height of the cut can be adjusted so that valuable wildlife is not 'shaved' off where this is unnecessarily destructive.

(c) Ongoing management
Wildlife will also suffer if the verges and hedges are left untrimmed. Coarse species of little benefit to wildlife will take over and suppress the more delicate wildflowers. Continued management is needed to produce the desired balance of species and to control injurious weeds (Weeds Act 1957 - Isle of Man).

(d) Chemicals
The use of chemical sprays reduces the number of wildflowers. Herbicides should only be used on those species outlined in the Weeds Act (1957).

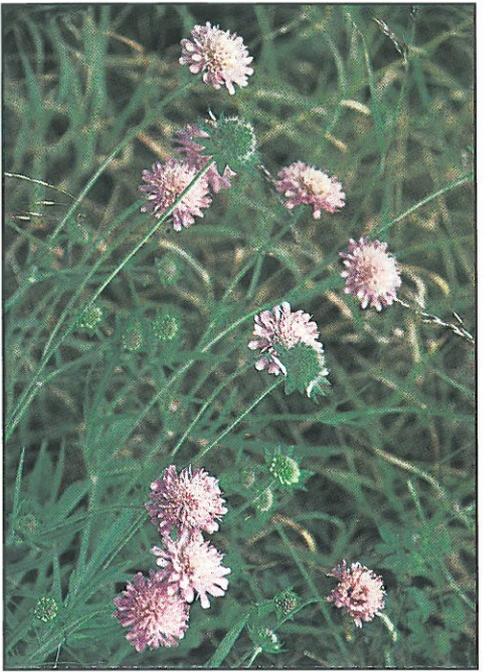
(e) Ditches
Ditches can be cleared out every 3 to 8 years. Clearing short stretches of ditch allows the vegetation to quickly re-establish.

MNCT



Sheep's-bit and Common Cat's-ear

MNCT



Field Scabious

Manx Verges and Why They Need Protecting

Roadside verges are an essential part of the Manx landscape, providing habitats rich in wildlife. The intensity of farming over recent decades has meant increased productivity at the expense of flora and fauna. The countryside has also seen more building development. This means that, in many cases, wildlife has been squeezed onto the verges offering us a glimpse of our natural heritage.

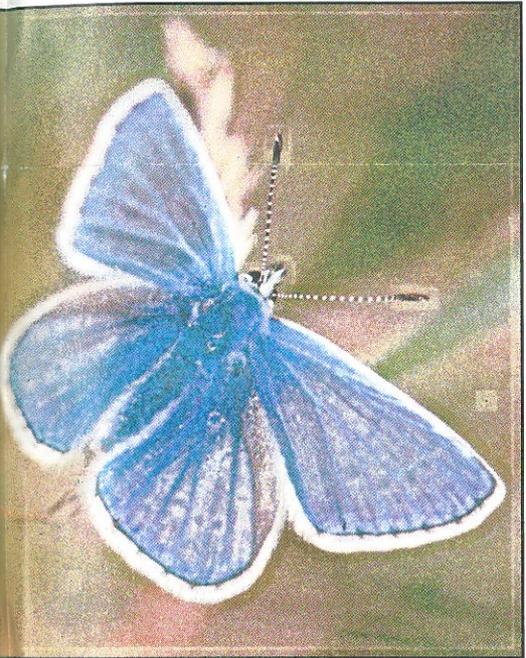
Verges and hedge banks also provide valuable links between areas of semi-natural habitat otherwise isolated by agriculture and development. It is along these wildlife corridors that plants and animals can recolonise habitats and maintain viable populations.

In spring and summer Manx roadside verges and banks have colourful displays that are important for locals and visitors alike. Many of the verges support important semi-natural habitats including vegetation reminiscent of meadow flora with

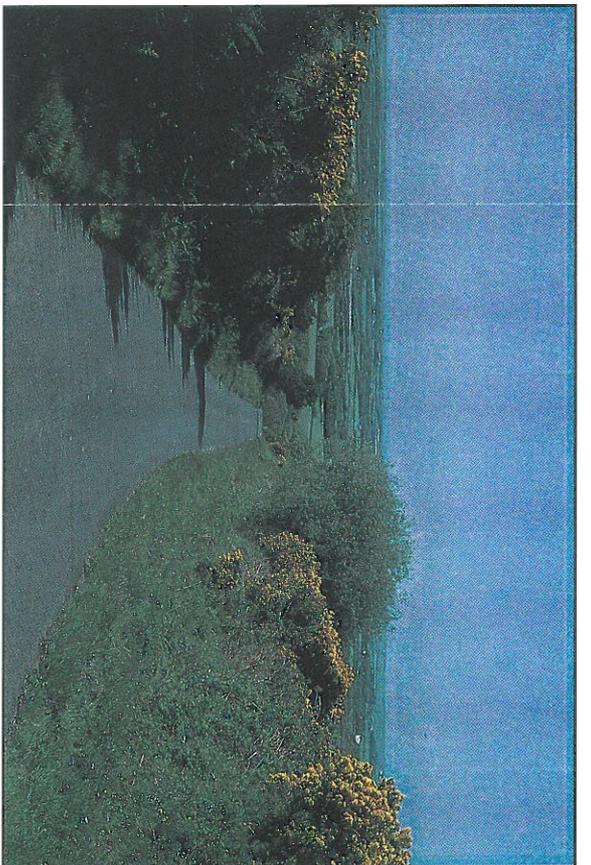
Manx verges support a number of butterfly species including the Orange Tip, Painted Lady, Meadow Brown and Common Blue. Many of the food plants essential to the butterflies' life cycle grow in the verges. Little is known about other invertebrates that live in Manx verges, further investigation into this needs to be carried out.

A wide variety of bird species use the verge and hedge banks for feeding. Birds of prey hunt for small mammals in the tall grassland, while other species utilise the verges for their abundant supply of invertebrates and berries. Verges also provide important nesting sites for certain birds particularly where woody hedges and shrubs persist.

Many small mammals live in verges. During the winter months, when the vegetation has died back, many small holes made by shrews and mice become visible.



MNCT



Verge topped with Gorse at Narradale

Historical value of Manx hedges

Ancient earth sod hedges line many of the Islands highways. These are very different from traditional British verges and hedges. In many cases these ancient earth banks date back to the Norse period when land was divided into treens and quarterlands.

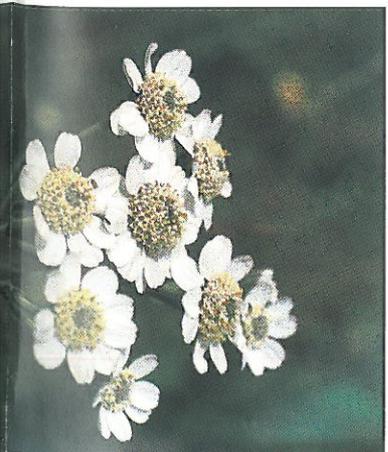
In the late eighteenth century European gorse was introduced to the Island as a winter feed and was planted along with hawthorn on the sod hedges to give additional height. These hedges can still be seen today.

It is important to conserve the structure of these ancient sod hedges which are an integral part of the Manx landscape.

Management for Wildlife

A roadside verge of nature conservation importance should be managed sympathetically for the species involved. The Verge Survey Project has identified those verges that require special management.

Management in a certain way can provide a haven for



A New Approach to Manx Roadside Verges and Hedge Banks.

For many years the Department of Transport (DoT) have managed our roadside verges and hedge banks. The situation today is somewhat different. The need for safety is as important as ever with larger volumes of traffic travelling at greater speeds. Technological developments have led to the use of mechanical cutters which are more economic than hand cutting. At the same time the community has become more aware of wildlife. With the help of HEDGE (Highways Edge Discussion Group on Ecology) the Department has identified five aspects as being important to manage roadside verges for wildlife successfully.

1. SAFETY OF ALL ROAD USERS

Safety must always be the DoT's first concern and receive priority over any other consideration. Safety dictates frequent, close, and in some cases early trimming of verges such as those on the TT course, those on corners, and a narrow safety strip for pedestrians along the margins of most roads.



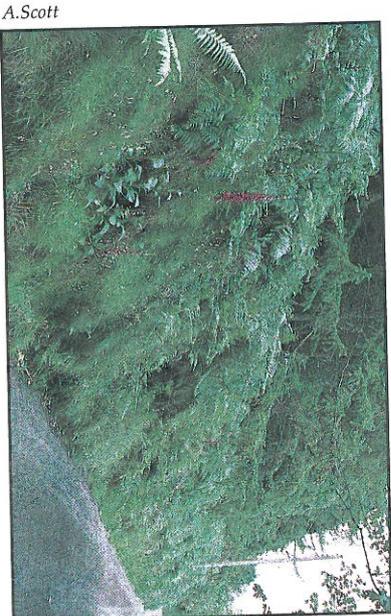
MNCT

Northern Marsh Orchid

2. CONSERVATION OF WILDLIFE HABITATS

Roadside verges and hedge banks provide habitats rich in wildlife. Many people are concerned about the inappropriate management which can have a damaging effect on the plants and animals that thrive in this environment. Thus management for conservation will be part of the new integrated approach. The attractive appearance of our spring and summer roadides will be enjoyed for many generations to come.

In conjunction with the Manx Nature Conservation Trust (MNCT) an island-wide road verge survey of all rural roads has been undertaken. This will enable the DoT to manage the verges more sympathetically with respect to conservation.



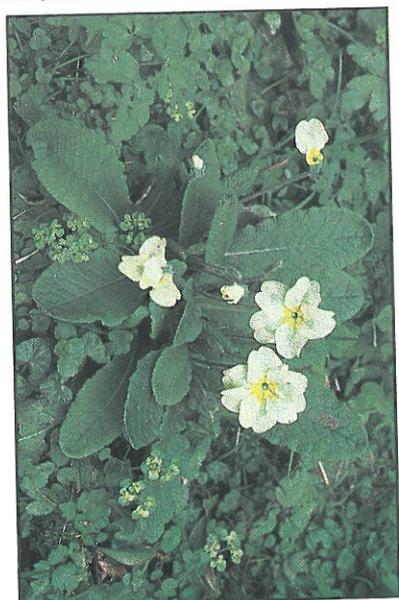
A.Scott

Verge at Dreemskerry

3. APPEARANCE OF ROAD VERGES

Verges managed for conservation have a wilder appearance, which many people appreciate. However many people would prefer to see a 'tidy', garden-like countryside, achieved only at the expense of wildlife. These two conflicting points of view require a degree of compromise with respect to specific sites.

T.Hopson



Primrose

4. ECONOMICS

Limited manpower and financial resources restrict the amount of management for conservation that can be achieved each year.

5. COMMUNICATION

It is important that the Department's aims, and the reasons for any changes to verges, are clearly explained to the community.

The full implementation of the new integrated approach to verge management will take time. However, the DoT believes that this policy is necessary for the preservation of the beauty of our Island, and for the conservation of our wildlife and landscape. The road verge survey project is a step towards these goals. The DoT hopes that this leaflet will help you both to understand the problems and be sympathetic to their efforts to solve them.